

# Voices From Behind Wisconsin Prison Gates

Issue 3, Summer 2017

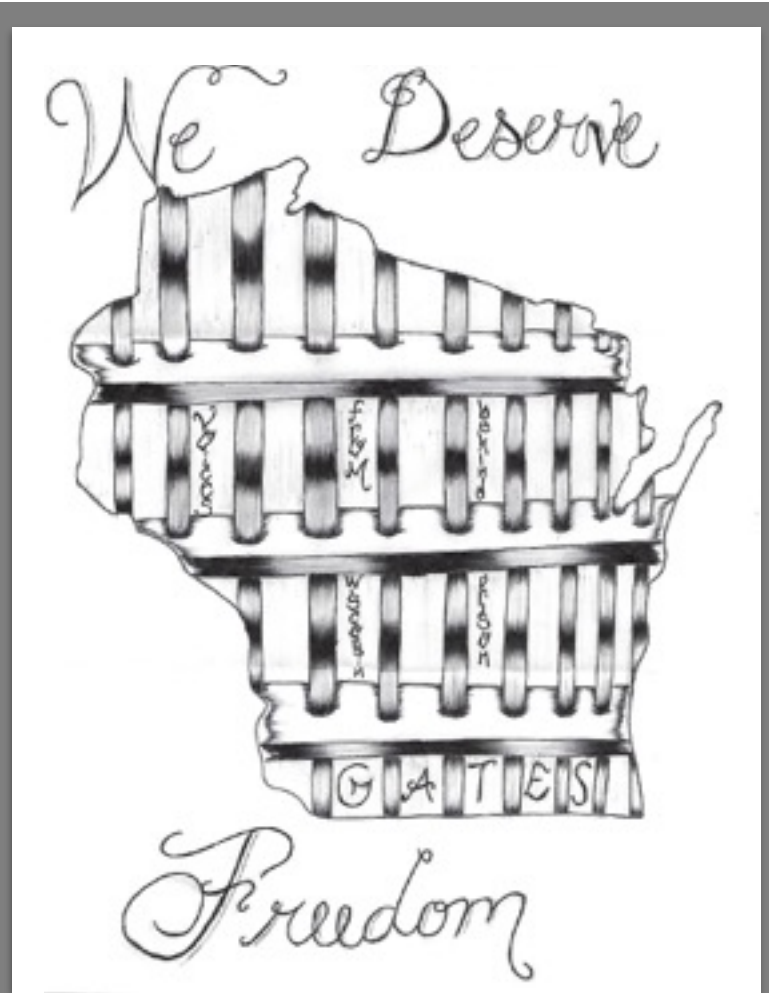
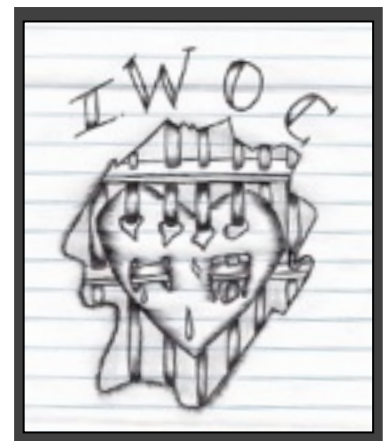
"Our strength truly lies in numbers. With making the public aware we also enlighten the youth to come after us. While at the same time forcing those who've once turned a blind eye to see what they've promoted; potentially affecting change & giving the youth a fighting chance...Enduring such a personal act of railroad & corruption, to this day fuels the desire to combat, enlighten & destroy this system of modern day slavery. The Wisconsin justice system is just a single cell, a single bolt to a bigger, more complex, and powerful institution."

— Waupun Correctional Institution

## An Injury To One Is An Injury To All



This is a newsletter for people incarcerated in Wisconsin, based as much as possible on what they are saying. It is edited and printed by the Milwaukee branch of the Industrial Workers of the World, (IWW) Incarcerated Workers Organizing Committee (IWOC). Please write us back if you have updates you'd like to give to people on the inside and the outside. The more that people talk together the less isolated we are. We are in contact with networks of prisoners in areas inside and outside of Wisconsin, and can help build connections. Let us know if there are other people inside jails and prisons that we should contact. Write to us at PO Box 342294, Milwaukee, WI, 53234. Our national hotline is 816-866-3808.



## Voices From Columbia Correctional Institution:

"I once read a beautiful article on Hurricane Rubin Carter. In it Hurricane talked about the story of a magician that put labels & spells on the animal kingdom so that they will view each other as prey and predator, while the magician was creator or godlike. The story, I took as an analogy on how politicians and other elitists keep the working class and the have-nots fighting against each other while they rule."

"The one thing that a prisoner & the guard both have in common, yet most don't want to acknowledge—is they are both relatively poor & powerless in the scheme of things...They are slowly but surely phasing in these food rationing measures. Every week the food is short or missing altogether...How is it productive to treat me like an animal—when laws protect them (the animals) better—and downgrade my humanity. The prison class is the most excluded and disenfranchised class. But we are a factor."

"In your first missive dated 10/19/16 you asked me nine questions that were very astute and appreciative. But due to the fact that this gulag is currently on a 'modified lockdown' and when the gulag goes on lockdown the security apparatus ('Thought Police') tend to be even more overzealous when it comes to certain prisoners' correspondence looking for a pretext to administer long term admin segregation. So for the sake of being cautious and prudent, given the current environment I'm now under, I will wait a until a more appropriate time to answer all of your questions."

"Since I got here not only has my property been destroyed, but also some of my other stuff such as boxer shorts & all hygiene products were also stolen and or destroyed, also evidence of my case proving my innocence has come up "missing"... Please do all that you can to get my voice out there. I can't communicate with anyone else because I can't afford it."



## A Voice From Stanley Correctional Institution

"I wanted to get my reading scores up, somehow, they have my score below 10.0 (which is wrong). They love to lose your scores in the system, which is what they told me. Well, I also know "you can find it, in the very same system they lost it in."...I also had my lawyer on it, who made a few calls for me. But since the complaint, they literally have posted for me to come test (which I refused now). I'll wait until I go somewhere else, and also, I wanted to prove my point (on paper) on how they try to hold us back from educating ourselves. In my case, I was only trying to raise my reading score up. Last week, they pulled up the piping in the kitchen, one hour before lunch is to be served. They completed the kitchen on our unit, and went to the next unit. But for days, dirt and dust was in the same area they served our food at. Some guys just didn't eat for days. And you would think that, they ask the custodians to come clean up the area (Right?) Well, no, because I work as a custodian on the unit and they made it clear that they didn't want us in the area to clean up NOTHING! I know for a fact this was a safety violation, had our food being dished out as dust particles flew in the air and dirt trails all in the hallway. We had to eat like this for about one week, until they finished the piping. These people, keep doing fund raisers for the puppies (Stanley has a dog program where they train dogs for disabled people). Which I support. But hell, I hate to say it but 'dogs are being treated better than inmate's here.'"



## Voices From

"I've been doing this eleven and a half years now and I can't count on one person out there to do anything more than lip service when it comes to putting the spotlight on the problems with the Criminal Justice system let alone the DOC. I stand with San Francisco 49ers Quarterback Colin Kaepernick in sitting down during the so called 'National Anthem.' I do not pledge allegiance to a piece of cloth. That cloth which represents the United Hypocritical States of America. Where separation between church and state is a talking point, because there is no separation. Liberty for the rich and justice against all poor and oppressed people. I've been representing myself 'Pro Se' in court for the past six and a half years presenting evidence of my innocence from the trial court all the way to the 'Seventh Circuit' federal appeals court, back down to the state court of appeals for the fourth time. I'm currently awaiting on a decision on my petition for Habeas Corpus review. And just as I am alone in this cell writing this letter, I'm alone in this fight. Let's look at where the injustice is: the policy makers, law enforcement leadership who target people, the propaganda surrounding the need for bogus policies, then move up from arrest, conviction, appeals, and then the conditions of confinement. Now I have absolutely no problem donating my time, knowledge, writing abilities, and my voice to a righteous cause. At the very same time I must insist on a quid-pro-quo arrangement in the name of justice."

## Green Bay Correctional Institution

"The situation here in GBCI is rapidly descending from madness to something akin to Soviet style policing. The entire administration starting with the warden on down hasn't been here for more than a few months and already they have systematically changed everything that has been in place for the last 30 years. Restricting the already limited movement down here to police escort only and making it next to impossible for us to receive legal assistance from other inmates who are proficient in a wide range of legal matters. These people are begging, literally begging for a violent uprising. I'm not talking about no windows getting broke; and guys refusing to lock in. No. It's full scale outright war against anybody not wearing green and can't walk out these doors at will."

"There's been a great deal of injustice and cover-up at play as usual within this corrupt system. It's only unfortunate that there's little to no grassroots movements and the mental illness is rampant in these modern day plantations. There have been multiple questionable deaths at Green Bay with 2 suicides back-to-back from individuals who unquestionably had mental illness and and I were told had requested psyche service to no avail. Then there was the situation with Frankie who for reasons found it necessary to attack staff and days later dead. Of course it was claimed to have been a suicide--the question how one can kill them-self in observation with no clothes only a smock and hard rubber mat to sleep on? Then some 17 days later Wilfredo threw hot water on a guard named McKace who had a history of issuing petty conduct reports, harassing prisoners in the kitchen and firing them for eating an extra cookie or a piece of cake never mind you're working for slave wages. A 1-rate less than \$10.00 every 2-week dish washing, 2-rate pots and pan 2-rate sanitation or 1-rate cutting grass, shoveling snow in the winter. It's crazy! So yes, we were placed on lockdown even though the situation was isolated. But then, it was an opportunity to politically posture as the overworked unprofessional guards lamented they felt unsafe. But these are the same corrupt, rogue guards that take every opportunity to screw over prisoners. At times I feel like the last of a dying breed where struggle and prisoner consciousness are concerned. The warden, deputy warden and security director are creating an environment of guards vs. prisoners and administrators vs. guards which keeps a climate of hostility. Many of us who have been abused and cry out are labeled trouble makers, liars and there is the attempt to create a perception we deserve the mistreatment. They are now attempting to deny recreation to those prisoners who work or attend school. When these so called suicide cases come forth they need to be investigated independently to see more beyond the smoke & mirror."

"My issue with WCI is a denial of health care and not keeping me safe. I suffer from a rare genetic connective tissue disorder called Ehlers Danlos Syndrome Type 3, Hyper-mobility. This causes my joints, muscles, and organs to come apart and is very painful. I can barely function anymore because my pain is so intense and my physical health is so bad getting dressed, making my bed or walking around is exhausting and showers often cause me to collapse. WCI is refusing to do anything that gives me any real relief, or slow the deterioration of my body. Their reason for not giving me the proper care for my illness is 'If we gave you that we would have to do it for others.'"

— *Waupun Correctional Institution*

"I've been here at Columbia Correctional Institution for twenty-five years. And this is my first incarceration in prison. I've seen many things here at this prison and not for the good. Why is it that the 'state' law states: There's to be no smoking at all or any kind of tobacco products on state property. And that includes the state parking lot. But it seems that the rules are not taken seriously by state employees. I wonder why? The new warden here tends to make everything gang related. Why is it that guard can talk to you any kind of way and get away with it? Are these new rookie guards being primed this way or is there an agenda behind this mass of disrespect towards inmates? What's really going on?"

—*Glenn Kirvan,*  
*Columbia Correctional Institution,*  
*#325119*

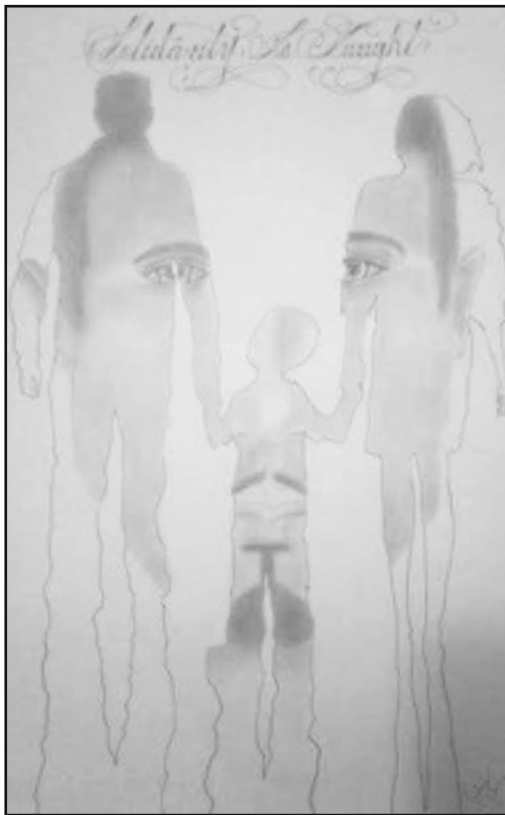


"Waupun Correctional Institution (WCI) houses seriously mentally ill prisoners who are dangerous to themselves and suffer from various forms of serious mental illness. Including major depression, schizophrenia, bipolar illness, schizoaffective disorder, various personality disorders with significant functional impairment, post-traumatic stress disorder, severe developmental or other mental disabilities and other chronic and serious mental conditions. Prisoners with serious mental illnesses are sometimes confined in the Restrictive Housing Unit (RHU) for months or years without adequate mental health treatment, with predictably devastating results. These conditions exacerbate their mental illness, making them increasingly dangerous to themselves and others. Their inadequately treated illnesses often lead to aggressive and violent behavior which is in turn used by the staff as justification (if not pretext) for further acts of extreme isolation and violence directed at the prisoner, thereby establishing a vicious cycle in which anger begets a violent response that begets more anger. Many of the prisoners housed in the RHU suffer from serious, chronic mental illness. Some of them have been housed in the RHU for years. Some routinely smear themselves and their cells with their own feces. Some howl or shriek continuously. Staff who are responsible for the care of these prisoners intermittently torment them by yelling at them and antagonizing them as if they were reviled animals. Many of the seriously mentally ill prisoners at WCI do not and cannot hide their conditions. They scream, howl, mutilate themselves, smear their waste and beg for help. Many have long, documented histories of serious mental illness. Many have requested for mental health intervention, to little or no avail. I will never come off this hunger strike until I expose the corruption and inadequate mental health treatment at Waupun to the government and the world. Therefore, we are asking that you join us in protest and fight to right this and other egregious wrongs."

— *Waupun Correctional Institution*

## *Solidarity is Taught*

— Waupun  
Correctional  
Institution



"Deliberate indifference to serious mental health needs. CI02 Wadack Meuller and Psychology staff refused me any form of treatment before or after suicidal lapse. I told CIOs, I was suicidal 5 times and even told them my plan and they refused me treatment. So I cut my left arm open deep and passed out and second shift did emergency cell entry because first shift left me to die for one hour and thirty minutes. 'Pscyh' staff names are T. Vanburen and J. Engstrom—they are all at the Waupun Correctional Institution, P. O. Box 351, Waupun, WI, 53963. I'm going to wait to submit my other paperwork until I get to my next placement because of sabotage because of me suing them for 3 quarters of a million. I'm exhausting my remedies as we speak and yes, 'I'm very afraid of sabotage' but not 'afraid to give up on self and others,' who 'fights the fights for prison rights.' So by March I will be in court on 'Deliberate Indifference.' If anyone can help me with litigation I would gladly appreciate it because I'm a little shallow of the law. But I know one thing, 'I'm fighting to the end!' I also give IWOC my permission to put my real name and DOC # in any paper work for newsletters and whoever else wants to help me with prison rights. Plus help me get educated about law and whatever else else needs to be none."

— Adrian L. White, Waupun Correctional Institution,  
#537065

"I want the outside world to know on how the inmates are being treated by the officers that work here at Columbia Correctional Institution. They have little to no respect for the inmates. The officers talk to us however they want and when an inmate says something we are the ones that get wrote up and punished. They make all these rules for us to go by, that we can't do, but the same rules they break right in front of us inmates. How can an inmate rehabilitate him or herself when these officers have so much hate and always refuses to give or provide treatment for us inmates and how even the decent officers quit or left the Columbia Correctional Institution to go work elsewhere because of how things are being run around."

— Columbia Correctional Institution

"I accept my time for the crime I did, but that doesn't mean to treat me any kind of way. We are still human beings, nothing less nor greater. The Wisconsin law states no smoking allowed on state property or in state buildings (Prisons). Why do the guards feel that they don't have to obey the state law? But we as state inmates must obey all rules, or be punished for disobeying the rules. So therefore, the argument must be, 'if the guards not following state law, why should we?'"

— Columbia Correctional Institution

"Day after day, this all seems too long.  
Night after night, another day down.  
This cell feels so lonely; I wish these walls will just fall.  
Season after season, another year down.  
Week after week, time's dragging on.  
Month after month, another holiday gone.  
This world seems so empty, no family around.  
Barely a letter, I can't even call.  
Minute after minute, the clock's slowing down.  
Sooner or later, another hour down.  
I know this ain't forever; they have to let me out.  
Out of sight out of mind, those so called friends of mine.  
Day after day, after night fall.  
I'm counting the days marking it down.  
Wanting to live life, outside of these walls."

-- Adele Kinnett, Robert E. Ellsworth Correctional Center,  
#527711



"Sentenced in 2005 for a homicide I didn't commit, opened my eyes to systemic corruption and its multiple layers to include people of both legislative & judicial. My contribution is first hand experience & proof of corruption. Not only does one possess awareness of tactics & the problems we in here face that affect those of the free world, but my contribution is, for the employing class, a detrimental solution-one step at a time. Public awareness. DOC is an entity with the authority to create it's own rules & regulations without an independent overseer to ensure institutions & their staff follow the same rules they've created. Too often complaints and requests addressed to a manager of a department are responded to by a low level staffer. So when inmates file complaints within the ICES process, they are instructed to "contact manager" who will never be held accountable due to lack of proof that they were even aware of the issue. Plausible deniability hinders inmate's ability to hold appropriate staff responsible. Only the one to whom correspondences are addressed to should respond to the questions & concerns within. This should be a law! Rule!"

— Leroy Jones, *Waupun Correctional Institution*, #375269

"DOC policy for chronic pain is reflective of the social problems of today's abuse of pain relievers. One of the things that is different from the problems that plague the streets is that in here we are in a controlled environment making abuse of anything other than muscle rub nonexistent. During my stay at Oakhill they went through five doctors in my nineteen months stay there, currently they have no doctor; the nurse practitioner has no authority to sign the prescriptions. In my case a committee in Madison who knows nothing about me and never examined me assessed my medical needs as no longer needing pain medication. Because I still keep pursuing them I have been sent to two different pain clinics eight different times. This last time the MD needed the DOC policy on narcotic pain relievers. Two weeks have passed and they still have to address the recommendations of the doctor there. For people like me with different spinal breaks, pain killers will be a necessary part of my life for the rest of my life." -- Anonymous

I'm sentenced to life plus 45 years, and chance of parole in the year "2104". Now after I saved 500 dollars in my release account which I can't touch, now for some odd reason, now I got to save 5,000 dollars for when I return to society. Now according to the Memorandum dated Sept. 25, 2009 read as Follows: "Although the rule became effective on Sept. 11, 2009, computer programing changes to allow for this rule are not complete. Until this can be done, current processes in regards to the \$500.00 and the 15% will continue. Once the programing updates are complete, accounts will be reviewed, on an individual basis, to determine if adjustments need to be made." Now if one looks at this statement, and I am not an attorney, but look at the word they used. It didn't state it's the law but they use the word rule. Now even though some might say, "Oh! That's what they mean by rule it's the law." Well let's go another step into this matter. They did say : "Accounts will be reviewed, on an individual basis, to determine if adjustments need to be made." No; the argument is this: "I am never getting out, my first chance of parole is the year "2104". People it's only 2017, I've been incarcerated since 1993. Do it seem like that I'm getting out soon? Now I can understand if I had twenty or thirty years to do, then of course. But see these so-called rules, brings much stress to us lifers who not getting out. Anybody with common sense would see that this isn't right at all. Now to go on with this craziness here at Columbia. The warden here has been moved around from Waupun Correctional to Red Granite to here at Columbia. This warden has taken horse shoes away from us. He had us on lock-down (oops) until about one month and a half while he (the warden) was in Canada on vacation. Many of the regular guards either quit or found better jobs because the warden is forcing the guards to work overtime. At times the guards (the good guards) will help us out at times. But the old staff will get on the good staff by saying: "Don't do that! He's an inmate.". It's like a double standard here."

—Harry Robinson, *Columbia Correctional Institution*, #164782

"I was notified that D.O.C. would be deducting 50% of all money that I earn through prison wages and even money given to me as a gift by family and friends. They told me that they would apply that money towards financial debts and obligations that I owe. They are collecting for debts that they are not authorized to collect such as court costs which are to be collected by the clerk of courts and supervision fees which are the sole responsibility of the department of probation and parole. The courts have sent notification in the form of a judgment of conviction telling D.O.C. which debts to collect and to collect for them at a rate of 25%. However, the D.O.C. has incorporated a rule that the claim supersedes the judgment of the courts. This rule allows them collection from all moneys at a rate of 50% for debts as well as an additional 10% to be put into a release account. This leaves roughly 40 cents out of every dollar to be used by me. The D.O.C. is applying this rule to the majority of persons who are incarcerated and it began not even 6 months ago."

—Leo Cowan, *Waupun Correctional Institution*, #399425

"As I'm sure you are already aware WCI didn't let in your last publication on the grounds that it would create a risk to the safety of the institution and discussed illegal activity. I filed a complaint and they reversed their position and said I could have it but I just filed another complaint because their practice of deeming the publication contraband and then only allowing it in to those who complained still violates the inmates' and IWOC's First Amendment rights. I will probably just add this claim to a lawsuit raising similar claims that I plan on filing down the road but if you are interested in filing a joint lawsuit and litigating the issue I'll draft the 1983 complaint and put everything together. Let me know."

— *Waupun Correctional Institution*

**"We know that the judge, D.A. and public [pre]tender are working together. They already like us. Please don't let them fall in love."**

—Ladell Evans,  
*Waupun Correctional Institution*, #533468

"Sentenced in 2005 for a homicide I didn't commit, opened my eyes to systemic corruption and its multiple layers to include people of both legislative & judicial. My contribution is first hand experience & proof of corruption. Not only does one possess awareness of tactics & the problems we in here face that affect those of the free world, but my contribution is, for the employing class, a detrimental solution-one step at a time. Public awareness. DOC is an entity with the authority to create it's own rules & regulations without an independent overseer to ensure institutions & their staff follow the same rules they've created. Too often complaints and requests addressed to a manager of a department are responded to by a low level staffer. So when inmates file complaints within the ICES process, they are instructed to "contact manager" who will never be held accountable due to lack of proof that they were even aware of the issue. Plausible deniability hinders inmate's ability to hold appropriate staff responsible. Only the one to whom correspondences are addressed to should respond to the questions & concerns within. This should be a law! Rule!"

— Leroy Jones,  
*Waupun Correctional Institution*, #375269

"I have been going to war with the guards and staff of Waupun Correctional Institution. I used to owe \$980 in debt, now all of a sudden I owe \$2,052.54! They are on bull and they're getting away with it. They're opening legal mail, refusing to give inmates food, lying to people's family and friends. Something needs to be done. The guards are acting like tyrants and a lot of inmates are losing the will to fight back. The ones who are fighting back are doing it the wrong way! (i.e. stabbing C.O.s and attacking other guards) It happened twice in the last month."

— *Waupun Correctional Institution*

"I am a 56 year old descendant of African slaves, being held by the Wisconsin Department of Correction. I've acquired a wealth of insight into this system of hypocrisy and I am seeking ways to help reform, dismantle, or call attention to the corruption. I just received a newsletter distributed by your organization which both impressed & inspired the idea that i may just win this battle of systemic corruption. Or, at least now stand a fighting chance...My battle is not one of individuality or of a current police department, or lawyer office, but one of a systematic corruption within the penal system from the top down & I'm more than ready to join a righteous organization in order to combat this beast me & others like me are faced with. I would like to apply for IWW membership."

— *Anonymous*

"I don't think it's right how they treat people here. Starting with myself! I'm protesting the way they treat inmates with mental illness. These people out here at WCI know I'm not financially taken care of, so they try to take advantage when a situation comes around because I don't have any outside help support team. I'm now on hunger strike while I'm in the hole. I had 30 stamps before I came down to the hole. They only sent me 1 stamp, saying they don't know where the other ones are....You guys have the right to use my name on the internet anywhere you can, to try and make things better. Just yesterday I told the sergeant here I wasn't feeling so good and I need to talk to the psychology staff, they placed me in the shower area for four hours cuffed, laughing at me, I felt ashamed and got very mad.. I used my last stamp to write to you guys. I need help more than ever dealing with the way I been treated....I have been here 10 years."

— *Waupun Correctional Institution*

"The Wisconsin prison system is filled with black males, some of whom may deserve to be here while others are genuine victims of circumstances that were created long before we ever came into this world. As someone who has spent the last 29 years under this system, my joys have all been private and my friends few. Yet, my experiences have given me far more than my enemies have taken from me, and I now see things as they are rather than how they appear to be. The seats of power are filled with professional hypocrites, who are trained in the art of deception and allowed to believe that their views are infallible, and their actions beyond questions. They create a favorable public image by pretending to be advocates of truth while never giving a clear, accurate, and complete account in the many reports they manufacture for public consumption. Which brings me back to the question of how can we help each other reach a common goal. What I bring to the table is a thorough understanding of how this system operates, and I'm not afraid to challenge those who need to be challenged. What I think we have in common is that: The same method they use against the prison population is also used against the public! For example, when the police shoot someone in the back, and the prosecutor engages in a secret investigation aimed at depriving the public of the facts after developing the story they choose to feed the public, with a conditional confidentiality clause they hide behind...Experience teaches everyone something he/she may not know or understand prior to the experience, and those of us who learn to rely upon our experiences are better able to deal with similar situations. It's not uncommon for inexperienced people to rely upon the views of those who claim to be operating in a professional capacity. We let doctors examine us, lawyers speak for us, and politicians think for us often because we think they are better informed. Experience has shown me that any time we venture into the U.S. (in)justice system we encounter older, upper middle class white males who have devoted themselves to a political and legal system in which its' members are committed to maintaining the status quo that serve and protect their interest. But since we operate in a world where perception is more important than reality. the best way to change a reality is by first changing the perception of it. This begins with the proposition that anything they say, can and will be used against them, which will reveal for us the fact that, their concern for reputation will have a greater influence on them when the responsibility for a criminal or embarrassing act is directed to a specific person rather than an unidentified member of a group, which is often the case when one of them is caught doing wrong, and blames it on the group!"

— *Wayne Brewer, Waupun Correctional Institution, #82189*